224

1. Pitfalls (ebēĭ, ndáń I)

The simplest kind of trap, the pit, is to be found throughout the entire region. Everywhere along the paths through the forest there are narrow, rectangular pits, many of which are three meters deep. They are so close to the path that at times they can be a source of danger -- carefully covered as they are -- to pedestrians who are not paying close attention. Near the bottom they become so narrow that a person falling into them remains hanging wedged between the walls halfway /118/ /Fig. 67 appears here in the original text/ and cannot get out again by himself. Pits having pointed posts at the bottom are not for wild animals; they are used only in war. The pits are usually constructed by two people, the owners, of whom one digs while the other carries away the dirt. The person who has done the digging may not have any sexual intercourse for five days after this work, for the pit is a hole like the female sex organ; thus, if he were to defile himself through sexual intercourse with a woman, he would not catch anything in the pit.

2. Spring traps (ekūĭdí)

The Pangwe distinguish seven types of spring traps, that is to say, traps in which the animal is killed either by a tree trunk suspended over a passage and released by means of a trigger device or by a freely balanced, weighted plate, raised above the ground.

A. True spring traps for wild animals
   1. ekūĭdi-osǎ̆b or osǎ̆b
   2. ekūĭdi-esə̄ŭə̄
   3. ekūĭdi-nkə̄k
   4. alū́na-ekūĭdi

B. Rat spring traps
   5. ekūĭdi-o-sí
   6. ekūĭdi-o-jó'b

C. Spring plates
   7. akūĭ

/119/ /Figs. 68 and 69 appear here in the original text./

531 In contrast to the previous patterns, the spear with barbs (ngam akǒn̂) cannot be explained in terms of technology, nor do I believe for a moment that it was originally a carved pattern, especially since it rarely occurs on the stools (Fig. 40). /Fig. 207 appears here in the original text./ Instead, I suspect that this pattern first made its appearance with the decorative scar incising, and that later it gained a place also among the carved patterns because of its pleasing shape. /Fig. 208 appears here in the original text./

A single pattern consisting of ellipses could not be explained by any stool carver. I was told that only the specialist who knew how to prepare the patterns would know. I did not meet this person, however, and therefore must leave it to later research to provide enlightenment in this respect (Fig. 212, Drawing 27). /253/

Even among the stool patterns there is a discernible development of the basic patterns into modified patterns. /Fig. 209 appears here in the original text./ To some extent the development remained at the level of the decorative barks and displays exactly the same forms as they do, but for the greater part it progressed considerably and produced a rich abundance of new forms.

The following motifs recur: the box pattern (ezǐma) -- plain or in variations (Fig. 209, a) -- the checkerboard surface (ndǒk) composed of juxtaposed diamonds, the cutlass sheath pattern (abă'm nkpwē da) -- plain and in a variation (Fig. 209, b) -- the acute-angled triangle, spearhead patterns (etŭn akǒn̂), the angular braiding patterns (benĭge be nkŭn̂), Fig. 209, c, and the mask pattern (epfoa).

Concerning homologous modified patterns, there are the following new ones.

1) The file pattern (zaṅe wô̱s, from zaṅe = engraving, wô̱s = file) consists of juxtaposed small diamonds that are not emphasized (Fig. 211, a). The artist does not see the background, but the outlines and therefore compares these with the engraved lines of the roughened file which intersect regularly.

531 831 2) The strand of cowrie shells pattern (nlŏn̂ e mvama): every second row of the diamonds, placed one above the other, is halved on the surface of the diamonds by a longitudinal stripe, originally

531

a_1 a_2 b c

Fig. 209. Patterns on Stools.

a combination of the patterns of a diamond and a parallel line (Fig. 211, b), and this suggested a string of cowrie shells. The similarity of the two is shown by Figure 210. It seems possible to me that in this case a further relationship between the cowrie shell and the diamond pattern plays a role. The Togo Negroes, for instance (according to an oral communication from the missionary, C. Spiess), recognize in the cowrie shell an image of the vulva; since ancient times the diamond pattern has been viewed in the same way by the Pangwe. After the introduction of the cowrie shell, the Pangwe immediately recognized its similarity to the diamond and transferred to the former the symbolism of the latter. As in Togo, the cowrie shell is regarded among the Pangwe as a symbol that brings good fortune, and, as such, it is applied to medicine horns or hung on anchored nets as a hunting medicine. Another symbol that likewise /Fig. 210 appears here in the original text/ brings good luck is the diamond which they paint onto their skins with redwood (a color that brings luck!) or tattoo onto their skins as a permanent pattern. We find

Fig. 210. Strings of Cowrie Shells.

here a remarkable contradiction in their conceptions. As we have seen, the sexual act was performed in connection

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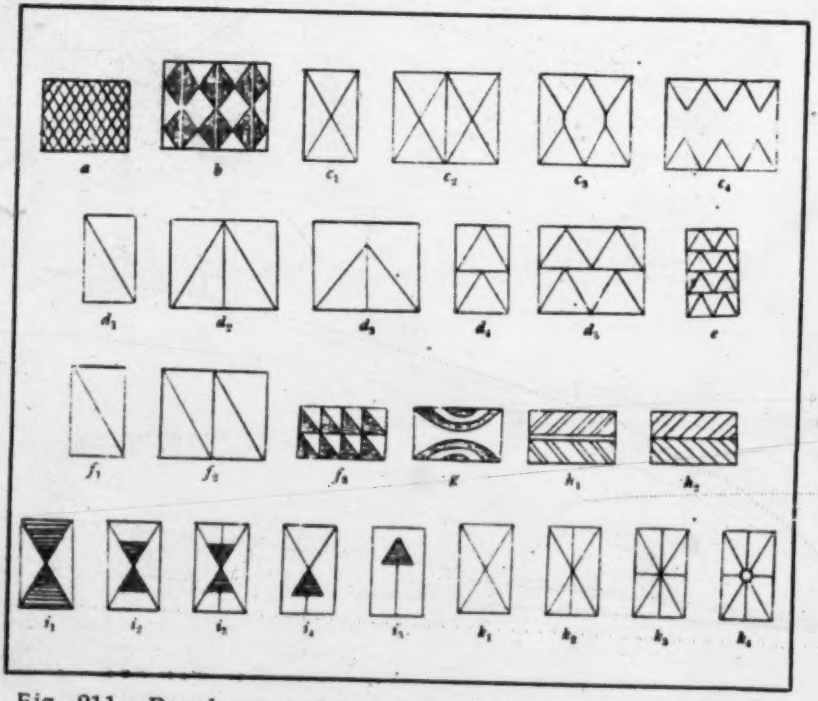

Fig. 211. Developmental Series of Modified Patterns of the Art of Carving.

531 with the sowing of ngon as a process furthering fertility; /254/ /Fig.
831 211 appears here in the original text/ in the case of iron smelting, on the other hand, the sexual act is strictly prohibited as something disturbing. The significance of everything sexual as bringing misfortune predominates throughout, and I therefore believe that we are dealing here with two temporally different conceptions: one, now recognizable only in remnants, which is older and concerns the influence and the influencing of fertility; another which arose later or was added later and concerns the sinfulness of sexual intercourse.

531 3) The arrow-leaf pattern (esõgele ndu = leaf on crossbow arrows to balance the flight).

4) The spike pattern (mesǒ'n = spike, or mesǒ'n m'egbwē̃le = spikes of the iron money).

Both consist of a number of triangles which have come about either as final members of the development of Series c (Fig. 211).

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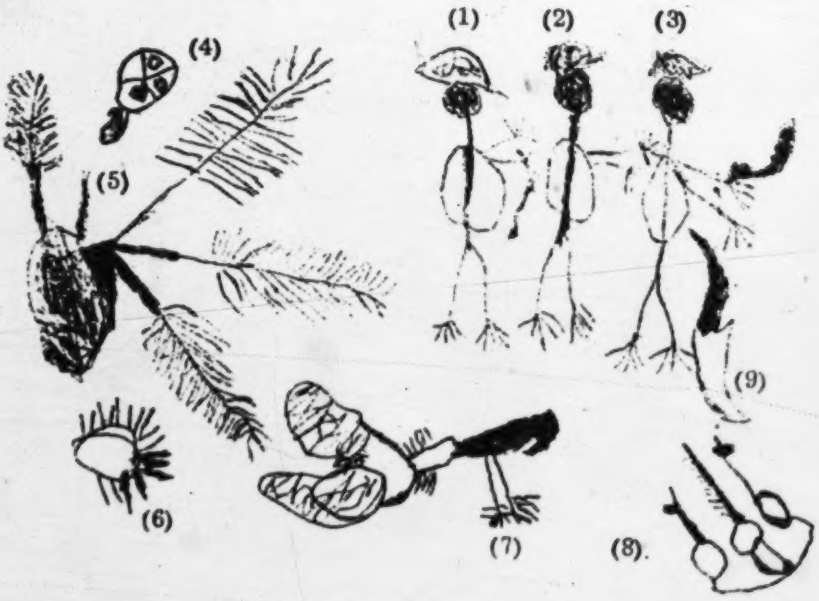

Fig. 226. Drawings by a Servant of the Author. Drawings 1-3. The author. Left, with a whip; right, with a walking stick. Drawing 4. Pocket watch belonging to the author. Drawing 5. Raffia palm. Drawing 6. Porcupine. Drawing 7. Man on a bicycle. Drawing 8. The author's key chain. Drawing 9. European pincers.

domestic or wild animals are very rare, there are none of plants, and as to tools, only the most striking ones (for instance, the large forging iron). Besides, most of the drawings are only scribbling anyway, in which only the author -- and perhaps not always even he -- had any idea of what he was doing. Obscene pictures, such as the one shown in Drawing 10, Figure 225, are a great /275/ rarity; in the majority of drawings representing persons the sex organs are completely omitted. The sheet of pictures which my black boy gave to me as a farewell present, which he also adorned with my picture (Fig. 226), is of significance only for the "modern trend in art" and perhaps also for the

● [831]

825 all from its characteristic of devouring crocodile's eggs (see Volume
784 I, page 273). Finally, turtles and poisonous snakes are taboo. We have encountered the turtle repeatedly in our description of the cults (see the Schok cult, Vol. II, p. 77 /Ed., not translated/, and the Bokung cult, Vol. II, p. 72 /Ed., not translated/) without being able to explain its appearance properly (1). The poisonous

[794]

1. In this connection it is particularly noteworthy that the turtle is the only animal which is prohibited for the initiated of a men's cult.

snakes with their sharply defined head (vipers!) have given rise to the comparison, penis = snake (see Vol. II, p. 32 /Ed., not translated/).

For other taboos it seems to be decisive that the animals lead a nocturnal life and that they have attracted the attention of human beings by their powerful, peculiar screech /192/ (see the prefix classes, Vol. I, pp. 27 and 28 /Ed., not translated/, the nocturnal animal, Vol. II, p. 36 /Ed., not translated/). Included in this category are alipeds, certain lemurs, the tree cony, the flying squirrel; among birds, the night rail Himantornis, the owls, and the West African blue-headed coucal.

Still further taboos seem to stem from the fact that the animals live in the house or near human dwellings and therefore belong, as it were, to the family. In this category we find the domestic rat and its sister, the African rat (edu) which is almost extinct in the Pangwe region, the parasite kite, and the sparrow, the agama, and perhaps also domestic lizards (Lygosoma reichenowi). For the rest of the prohibited animals, their repulsive smell or their ugly and peculiar shape enters in as a consideration. In this connection we should mention: the civet cat and the Herpestes species, with the exception of Herpestes melanurus, the shrews, all of them having a repulsive smell, the shrew otter (Potamogale) because of its peculiar appearance (half mammal, half fish), the scaly anteaters because of their armor, Sciurus pumilio, toads, and frogs. There
[831] is a quite remarkable, real fear of the inside of the elephant's tusks,

825 which one is not even allowed to step over since one's penis would
784 become as flaccid as the elephant's gums. The latter do indeed
[831] look rather uninviting with their bluish-red coloration and flabby consistency. It goes without saying that a woman likewise is prohibited from eating the meat since she could transmit a debilitating influence to the man during intercourse.

943 In the case of temporary food taboos that are enforced for the
825 duration of pregnancy and nursing, the decisive element -- as I have
784 said -- is the fear that the animals' characteristics might be trans-
262 mitted to the child. For example, there is a taboo against the hawk-eagle, Lophoaetus occipitalis (abǎ'jg'k), an animal which the Pangwe themselves greatly admire for its beauty, and whose crown the boys try to imitate by sticking long feathers in their hair or behind their ears. In the case of pregnant women, however, the situation is different. They reason as follows: if the child, by acquiring the bird's characteristics with its food, were also to develop an excrescence, how unnatural and ugly that would be! For the rest, the natives fear above all large heads and fat bellies -- two characteristics which frequently strike us unpleasantly in Negro boys -- as well as long legs. In this connection, one readily perceives the accuracy of the Negroes' powers of observation and the precision with which they recognize the slightest differences among various species of a genus. Birds with an ugly screech are completely taboo, since the child might screech in just the same way, something which would be extremely disagreeable, as any father of a family would understand. Of further significance is the exclusion of trembling or wobbling animals, through which the child might even become epileptic. /193/

The most terrible danger threatening pregnant women, however, is from animals which live in any kind of hollow (holes in the ground, in trees) or are caught there. One can speak of a downright horror vacui. If such an animal were to be eaten, the child might also wish to stay in its hollow, "in the belly," and a difficult birth could be expected. Similarly, during this time the parents may not remove any bird nests built in holes in trees, and one of my employees who had made a woman pregnant resolutely refused to make a model of a cassava loaf for me, because it was supposed to be hollow inside.

539 833 836 tǫ̣bŏ nale, adzǫ̣ a n'abĕ
remain thus, affair it is bad.

Chorus:

A ta ma vū or a na ma
Oh, my father, I am dying, Oh, my mother, I

vū.
am dying (4).

[195] 4. The Negro dies on every occasion when something unpleasant happens to him; the chorus thus speaks from the point of view of the woman who is in such despair concerning this "bad affair" that she would almost like to die.

836 548 Although there are no actual prostitutes, a number of the women enjoy the free life of a girl and up to the age of 30 or 35 years remain ngǫ̣'n, "girls." This kind of "girl," to whom every man, boy or adult, whatever his name, whether he is handsome or not, is equally /255/ welcome, is called a ñzīla. The fact that people have no better opinion of her than we have of a loose woman is shown by a song sung at a festival for the [533] souls. In its own way this song represents a delightful satire and, for the Pangwe, an extraordinarily witty, poetic achievement. I have reproduced it in Section 20 ("Music") /Ed., not translated/.

In spite of the great sensuality, relations between the sexes 831 do have finer traits; tactful behavior, precise observation of prescribed forms, and profound spiritual sensibility are not absent. The ingenuous conduct of the young man toward the girl's parents and the naturalness with which the young people enjoy their love, without obligations, without social prejudices, have something almost ideal about them.

584 innocent and anxiously avoid anything that might give rise to
836 gossip. Thus, if we speak with the Pangwe about sexual matters, we constantly hear the word oson, "shame," oson this and oson that. Admittedly, wherever European influence is spreading, the
[177] use of oson decreases, for together with this influence the religious conceptions upon which shame is based are disappearing (as we saw in the case of sin, nsŏm); at the same time, moral sensibilities are becoming laxer, and there are no longer any self-imposed restraints.

With free love universally prevalent, it naturally happens
836 also that several lovers find their way to the same girl in one night, especially when she is no longer a beginner, and she takes "pity" -- as the Pangwe themselves say mockingly -- on them all (1). With such nžīla, especially the older ones, the

[802] [211] 1. Even to keep track of their number is too difficult a task for her memory; for that reason the Jaunde girls count the number of their friends on little sticks of raffia (see Zenker).

men also permit themselves the use of offensive expressions and crude jokes, such as would be unheard of and strictly prohibited with a young girl -- especially the future wife. As an example,
● [831] phalli are sometimes made of wood and then displayed wrapped in a leaf.

As has already been indicated, liaisons of the heart based on
831 genuine love are by no means uncommon. Nobody, on the other hand, will be surprised to learn that for the most part they are of limited duration and are incapable of bearing the burden which we expect of them. Thus I did not learn of a single case of a person
[762] committing suicide because of unrequited love or a spurned courtship, even though women hang themselves because somebody stole a few of their miserable hens, and men shoot themselves because their father sold a daughter in order to buy a wife, instead of leaving her to the son, the girl's brother. Generally speaking, the power of Negro love is not as great as that of the love of the Whites.

831 If the latter resembles a rushing stream which tears away everything in its path, the love of the Blacks is like a still, deep lake, and it is certain that even in Africa the magic power of love often intimately joins two hearts and that there is genuine love which in every respect is comparable to the European conception. This point is well demonstrated by the "love tests" which the men sometimes apply in order to convince themselves of the love of a future wife, quite according to the pattern: "Drum prüfe, wer sich ewig bindet, ob sich das Herz zum Herzen findet" /Trans., "Therefore assay, before you bind yourself never to part, whether there's harmony 'twixt heart and heart," from Schiller, "Das Lied von der Glocke"/.

539 514 836 An example is presented by the following tale.

One day a young man went to see the girl that he loved and wanted to marry. At night, while he was sleeping in her house, he had /257/ to urinate, but since he did not know where the toilet was and since there was no man there whom he could ask, he said to himself: "Oh, what shall I do in my need? -- -- But let me see whether the girl really loves me!" He took a small cooking pot (obĕbĕ') and used it so that it was filled to the brim (lŏ'dŏtŏ); then he covered it with leaves and placed it behind a bed. The next morning he set out on the way home, and the girl accompanied him until they were outside the village. On the way he said: "I am going now to my village, and I shall see

ng(e) oa džĭn ma: obĕbĕ', ng(e) oa bĕ'ne
if you love me: (the) little pot, if you hate (do not

ma: obĕbĕ',"
love) me: (the) little pot,

that is, the little pot will show whether you love me or not! The girl did not understand what he meant by this and asked him to explain. But he simply answered:

ŏ', kaa dzăm mfĕ,
Oh, no matter other (than that):

ng(e) oa dzĭ'n ma: obĕbĕ', ng(e) oa bĕne ma, obĕbĕ'.

In the case of gonorrhea, the infected woman can demand
164 damages only if she notices the misfortune before she has been
684 paid for the favor rendered. The damages amount to 400 spears if the disease came from a person of the same kin group, and 1000 spears if it came from a person of another kin group. With the payment the "temporary marriage contract" is terminated, and thereby any claim for damages is nullified. In other words, it is always a good idea to pay one's debts as soon as possible:

[539] a bɛ̌le, a bɛ̌le, a kɔ̌n abɛ̌ mayɔ̌k.
Keeping, keeping, it strikes (a) poor bargain.

The person who always keeps his money to himself runs into an unfavorable price situation.

Their unrestrained sexual intercourse has a highly deleterious
● 831 effect upon the Negroes; it weakens and stupefies them. Smaller
461 boys are often quite useful as servants, but once they reach sexual maturity and become acquainted with women, they can simply no longer be used. The Pangwe recognize this bad influence, and intelligent ones among them did not hesitate to confess frankly to me that their sexual practices corrupted them and made them incapable of strenuous physical or intellectual work. We do not need the testimony of individuals, however -- popular customs demonstrate this insight sufficiently. I believe that, aside from
[834] being based upon the original religious conception concerning the sinfulness of sexual intercourse and its incarnation in the woman, the abstinence rules for war and hunting expeditions and for iron smelting are based on the experience that sexual intercourse weakens the man's physical and intellectual capacities. Naturally, the man is inclined to heap the blame on women /268/
[196] and bebɔ̌n, "vaginas," as he contemptuously calls them (1).

171 1. "Terms which originally only signified 'vulva' or 'cunnus' but were then generalized into the concept 'wenches,'" exist everywhere in Europe, too; see Anthropophyteia, Jahrbücher für folkloristische Erhebungen und Forschungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der geschlechtlichen

171 Moral /Anthropophyteia, Yearbooks for Folkloristic Inquiries and Explorations into the Historical Development of Sexual Morality/, edited by Dr. Friedrich S. Krauss (1912), Vol. 9, p. 31.

833 777 Over against the great mass of women, the bebŏbáń, who through sexual intercourse bring the man misfortune, there is the exceptional phenomenon of the woman who among the Ntum is called ayūē' III and among the Fang ayă. Union with her brings both parties, the woman as well as the man, good fortune. At the same time her influence is more important for the man, for instance, during military and hunting expeditions. If, for instance, the man goes hunting on the day after having had intercourse with such a woman, he is bound to see a wild animal soon and to kill it. If he goes to war, "his rifle will hit its mark," whereas the enemy's will not. For this eventuality, moreover, he has the woman give him a medicine, namely red wood that she has ground in a certain way (bă-ayă, mfumu-bā). The woman, too, is lucky on this day if she goes "hunting" for fish, that is, if she goes on a fish drive (a lĭĭk), or works on the farm (see Vol. I, p. 56).

But -- as was said -- such women who bring good fortune are a rarity; the majority of women bring misfortune. If a man goes hunting on the day after coition, all the animals evade him in a wide arc (a bă,ń), hence the name ebŏbáń.

[833] 715 954 831 In the peculiar custom of the miăk consecration I see proof of the fact that the Pangwe know the harmful effect of excessive sexual intercourse. The word miăk actually means the castrated animal, in particular the buck goat (see Vol. I, p. 76), and here it is applied symbolically to a person who through a public and solemn declaration is for a time excluded from sexual intercourse. After a successfully concluded war, more rarely upon some other occasion, somebody (usually the chief) decides to consecrate his son or his daughter to purity. Naturally, neither of the latter may as yet be acquainted with sexual matters, in other words, they will only be

785 554 831 from four to six years old. They are thus consecrated so that one day they will surpass all others in insight and understanding; then, through their spiritual superiority, they will acquire influence, power (knowledge is power!), and especially wealth. In the case of the son, this will be to his own advantage; in the case of the daughter, it will benefit the father who can get a higher purchase price for her than for a girl with the usual loose way of life. In other words, the "savages" know well the value of moral purity. /269/

831 785 [184] The custom of mĭăk consecration was formerly practiced throughout the Pangwe region. Nowadays, however, since warlike times have ceased, it is to be encountered only among the Fang of the central Uelle region. I should like to compare the custom [171] to the practice found among us during the Middle Ages, whereby the heads of important families (especially princes), after some lucky success (for instance, in war), destined one child for the clergy and consecrated it to the pure life dedicated to God, frequently not without calculating the advantages that could accrue to them from such an action.

785 789 556 831 [824] The procedure of the consecration feast is as follows. The child, clothed in a small loincloth, is led to the medicine man and is washed by him with a medicine water. The medicines used for this are barks of various trees that bear ample fruit, such as the Pseudospondias microcarpa (Rich.) Engl. (ofŏs), so that the child's understanding may bear fruit as abundantly as these trees or, in other words, so that wealth may fall to its lot in the same abundance as the fruit of these trees falls to the ground beneath them. The various barks are placed in a container made of banana leaves, and hot water is poured over them. After the ablution, the child must swallow the principal medicine, a bundle of ngon [824] with the chopped leaves of certain "weak" plants, such as Hibiscus moschatus (Roxb.) (tĕge III, from a tĕk, "weak," because [833] the fruit is cooked in a short time), in order to make the child equally weak, that is, sexually incapable. Furthermore, the ngon [825] is mixed with chicken meat -- the chicken is the bird of day, of the good and the pure, and at the same time it is supposed to point symbolically to the wealth that is desired for the child (the chief, the "Very Rich One," is regarded as the privileged son of the

831
785 sun) -- or with elephant's meat, in which case the child is sup-
556 posed to become spiritually great and important, just as the ele-
[825] phant surpasses the other animals physically, or, finally, with the meat of the hedgehog -- the child is to get as many things as the hedgehog has quills (1).

[539] 1. A well-known proverb, to be intelligible, would have to be translated into Pangwe something like this: He is as full of stupidities as the hedgehog is full of quills.

785 Thus, the child becomes miäk. Its loincloth is taken off
831 and from now on -- be it male or female -- it must go about completely naked. Here is another significant fact regarding
[834] the moral-religious view of the Pangwe: clothing, that is, the
[291] covering of the sex organs, arose because the sense of shame (o-so-n) which started with the first sin (n-sö-m, root so), that is, sexual intercourse, demanded it. If the innocent state (ignorance of sexual matters) is artificially restored, clothing becomes unnecessary.

The miäk are generally respected. People are careful not to speak to them about sexual matters or to seduce the girls, espe-
[664] cially since /270/ the protection which they are accorded by custom is effectively strengthened through the right of the father or the relatives to shoot down the seducer without further ado wherever they find him. Nowadays, however, the old customs have been somewhat relaxed; the miäk are not always what they ought to be.

Annulment of the chastity obligation takes place in the same solemn manner when the consecrated person is fully grown, in other words, not before the age of 20 years. In the case of the man, it is required that he prove himself the bravest in war or at least that he has shot an enemy (1). In the case of the girl, it is

[177] 1. Today, in the regions influenced by the Whites, this decree has had to be moderated.

[583] required of the suitor that, contrary to the usual custom, he pay

785
●93| [583] the already higher marriage price in advance, down to the last little string of beads.

The ceremony itself proceeds as follows. A goat is killed, and its blood is mixed with medicines by the medicine man and rubbed onto the body of the miăk. The medicines are made from shavings of bark from various trees and are supposed to cause sexual incapacity to be "stripped off"; the goat is chosen because, [825] in contrast to the chicken, it is the animal of evil, of the sexual drive. Finally, the medicine man solemnly declares that the person concerned has ceased to be a miăk and is thus relieved of the obligation to abstain. Henceforth the erstwhile miăk again wears a loincloth.

5. Deviant Forms of Sexual Intercourse

The Negro's strong sweat secretions, but chiefly a skin 839 disease -- Krokro /Ed., ?/ (metĭăh) -- appearing on the sex organs and between the buttocks, cause an itching irritation which among the Pangwe has led to the bad habit of constantly scratching the penis whenever time and opportunity are favorable, even when there is no itching as well as to relieving an itch. They do this by twirling the penis in a manner similar to that used in making fire with sticks. This is a sport practiced by boys and adults alike and is called a kĭk e metĭăh or a wŏ'o (= wŏk) metĭăh, which simply means "to relieve the itching by scratching" (metĭăh means itching of any kind, Krokro being simply the most unpleasant form of itch). On this occasion, erection naturally takes place as a rule, although no orgasm follows, just as there was no intention of relieving sexual desire. Indirectly, on the other hand, this action passes into a form of real masturbation, likewise through twirling the penis (a sĭăk nkŭn) from which, however, orgasm does not always follow either. In certain regions among the Okak this nsĭăn-nkŭn (the noun) is prohibited (ekĭ); it is said that otherwise the person concerned will no longer be able to cohabit with women successfully. /271/

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Sentence 9: agbŭ́ŋ zɜ̄ngbwā' (seven antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̄ agbŭ́ŋ asiē'men (six).

Sentence 10: agbŭ́ŋ mūə̄m (eight antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̄ agbŭ́ŋ zɜ̄ngbwā' (seven).

Sentence 11. agbŭ́ŋ ebū, (nine antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̄ agbŭ́ŋ mūə̄m (eight).

Sentence 12. agbŭ́ŋ avə̄m (ten antelopes) d'a ke a bɛ̄ agbŭ́ŋ ebū, (nine).

[832]

Young lovers like to play the game with their girls, as may be surmised from the somewhat romantic text. Jokingly, the girl says that she will give herself only to the one who can go through the entire game without making a mistake.

The Memory Game (nkŭ́k ondūle or endēle)

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211

This game is known only among the Fang and a number of adjoining Ntum kin groups, and it is supposedly indigenous. A flat staff with short, paired transverse extensions and vertically inserted knobs is used in the game. The end of the staff usually has a head carved on it (Fig. 113). Each pair of transverse extensions, along with the knob and the adjacent lower part of the staff, forms a segment on which eleven different points are designated for the answers (see Fig. 114).

The game may have developed from an older, simpler one in which the individual parts of the human body were enumerated. This notion is suggested by the designation of the staff as the body, of the carved end -- even when it is not a regular head -- as neck and head, by the tripartite arrangement of the transverse extensions -- absent in Figure 113 -- (corresponding to the upper arm, the

[822]
[831]

Fig. 112. Stick with Pieces of Raffia used as Mnemonic Device in the Memory Game of the Dwarf Antelope. About one-fourth actual size.

Memory Game, nkuk-ondüle, made of Wood, Southern Ntum Region. A little over one-fifth actual size.

Fig. 113

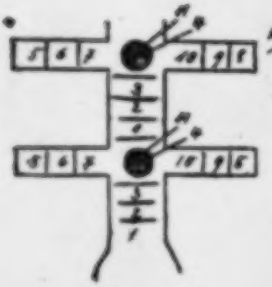

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Fig. 114
Two Sections of the Memory Game nkuk-ondüle.

lower arm, and the hand), and finally by the upright knob, called [122] [631]
tüngenüge (the red one; red as the color of reproduction, of life), by which originally the male sex organ was doubtless understood. The implement is thus unquestionably supposed to represent a human body whose members are multiplied.

The game is played by two people, one questioning, the other answering. The former, seated in the circle of listeners, holds the implement in his hand and indicates the various points that /309/ must be answered. At each one he calls out: "zé zé? = What is that?" (phonetically assimilated and corrupted from dzé dzé). The principal player sits farther away and answers the questions in rhythmic song while the others stamp their feet or clap their hands in time. He is, of course, not allowed to make any marks to aid his memory, such as dividing a little stick into the corresponding number of sections. This is brainwork. [533]

524
153

The 11 questions, which are the same for each segment, go as follows: 153

1, 2, 3. (see the corresponding numbers in Fig. 114) 524

nkük ondüle wöle. 539

Body (of the) ondüle here. That is the body of the ondüle.

837

"Etudes sur le Pays Pahouin [Study on the Pahouin Country]," op. cit.

"friendship wife"), show, as does the freedom just referred to, that the curbing of adultery can be explained by social reasons which are quite alien to sexuality.

[527 561] 831 595 581 The possibility of raping women of neighboring people during the time of conquest, the possibility of buying foreign women at a good price, so long as the slave trade lasted, permitted the "chiefs" of groupings to remedy the dangers due to the unsatisfied desires of the young men. Apparently the Fang do not display, as do some people, (2) signs of unsatisfied sex due to the fact that

2. Cf. R. Bastide, Sociologie et Psychanalyse [Sociology and Psychoanalysis], pp. 160-161.

women remain the property of the older men. What is sought is the legal possession of the woman, let us say, for the many advantages it entails, rather than sexual possession. And in this sense the justification brought forward by L. Mba can be understood when he writes, "It was not material satisfaction of the senses which drove the Pahouins to polygamy, but many other reasons. . . ."

581 562 684 628 When the marriage is consummated, the woman goes from a state of near liberty to one of strict sexual control. The specific painful physical penalties for adultery to which the woman alone is subject are particularly severe: being exposed naked before the assembled village, being tied to the ant tree, excision of the clitoris or pimento torture, various mutilations. When the woman, either by flight or by rape, leaves the grouping into which she married, the whole group reacts violently. It is the cause of fights, kidnaping, and pillaging of the village that has taken her in.[3] (3) There is the most absolute contrast between this control

581 562

3. "Hence, conflicts that last for years, expressed through kidnaping of women and ending in gunshots," Libreville, Archives of 1909. And

794 himself in the interior courtyard. The final ceremony includes
787 the erection of a hollow clay statue (3) (also called Ngil) before

3. Cf. the description in the articles of Leroux, op. cit., and Poupard, op. cit.

which "all the inhabitants of the village and those of the villages of the same line" must appear, and whose function is to reveal the guilty ones (who have caused unexplained deaths or calamities from which the whole group has suffered, etc.). The intervention of the Ngil is sought in moments of serious crises. It calls for total action involving large groupings for whom it has a real therapeutic value: by determining guilt (impossible to contest because it is a matter of a superior and anonymous justice), by reinstating unity (on a passionate basis) at the time of the punishment, by re-creating a new vigor by means of this "purification."
794 The religious aspect of the "association" justifies such an
769 absolute, such an indisputable action. Unfortunately, we know little about it, except that certain dead are called upon by means of skulls, bones, and sacrifices, and that fertility rites are included
● [831] when the Ngil has a female companion, Omore (1). [144]

1. H. Trilles, op. cit., p. 62, writes that "the new members must accomplish a number of actions connected with the act of generating before the statue of Omore ...," and Poupard speaks of "shameful ceremonies."

We have here a prevalent dialectic: a recourse to the social past — which is a true reservoir of endlessly accumulated powers — in order to instruct the social future and to fertilize it; the past and the future, the ancestors and the living are, like the generation of the ésa and that of the mwanɔ̌, in the relation of begetter to begotten. This movement expresses dependence and a certain social order. The intervention of the Ngil — but it is not the only

nkukum had to excuse his wealth, primarily by distributing it through customary hospitality and also by a special device of economic-social control resembling the potlatch, the bilaba.

This practice seems to have been especially common among the Boulou. Bertaut relates the word to a Ngumba root meaning "to talk," "to cajole." I should rather incline toward a derivative of the verb lap, "to draw water," by extension "to splash," which can figuratively also convey the idea of scoffing. It is not impossible that the bilaba mechanism was connected with that of the joking relationship, awusɔ. The bilaba begins with a challenge from one nkukum to another, each man claiming to be the richer. The challenger goes to the house of the challenged, carrying a load of merchandise, mebo me dulu, "legs for the journey," and accompanied by a large retinue of musicians and singers, etc. When he reaches the home of the other njem bilaba (bilaba dancer), he overwhelms him with presents and taunts; his opposite number replies, present for present and jeer for jeer, until he has contributed more than the equivalent of the mebo me dulu. The first njem bilaba goes home and waits for the other's return visit with his own mebo me dulu. Visits and countervisits may go on for a long time, each of the bejem bilaba calling on his immediate family for help, then upon his lineage or clan, for continued supplies. The bilaba therefore comes to be a collective affair. It must be observed that not just any kind of merchandise is exchanged: a njem bilaba in the east (nku, ɔku) provides local products, (livestock, cacao, ivory, etc.), in the west (nkɛ́) imported products (loincloths, salt, powder, etc.) (1). It should be remembered /61/ in this

1. M. Zoll'Owambe (no. 125) speaks of akum so, "merchandise of the north," imports, and of akum nsak, "merchandise of the south," products of the country. But there appears to have been some confusion. In fact, so = coast, downstream, is related to nkɛ́ = west, which also means downstream, while nsak = hinterland, upstream (nku = east, related to kui = to come from, rise from, emerge); cf. Largeau, who considers the north to be on the right (male) and the south on the left (female). Imported products would be considered male.

connection that the points of the compass have a sexual implication, which is not well understood. The bilaba sets up a sort of joking relationship between the families of the participants, which may continue after their death.

The institution seems to be dying out, though it was still flourishing between the two /World?/ wars and often involved considerable amounts of money (1).

> 1. Balandier (no. 175 and in a personal communication) stresses the economic importance of the bilaba which, in a society without a money or trade economy, constituted one of the principal means of circulating goods and, especially, of diffusing imported commodities.

In spite of the fear his success inspires, and perhaps because of this fear, the rich man enjoyed undoubted authority in his village and sometimes beyond it. Nkukuma, the absolute form of nkukum, is used to translate "chief" (it probably means, more precisely, "person of note").

The word évet, also applied to subchiefs or government "capitas" is likewise used —a correct nuance if, as Bates says, évet is a corruption of headman applied originally to the chiefs of trade caravans. These men were chosen for their business astuteness, diplomacy, authority, and courage, but they were only deputies of a clan or village, not true political chiefs. To convey the latter implication the preferable term is still njôô bôt (Fang, nzoé mur) from jô = to say, to command, a term indicating a de facto state, /état de fait/ rather than a legal notion. It should be recalled that there were no political leaders other than the seniors, mintôl, of the extended families. Their authority was further limited by the ease with which their brothers could leave the village to establish another nearby (2).

> 2. But among some Pahouinized peoples the existence of royal insignia shows that chiefship /chefferie/ is an institution: among the Ewôndo and Yanda the head of the clan designated his successor or, if he

judicial inquiry at Ambam in 1948 after a raid on ze mimfaka, an old chief who was a Protestant and an elder of his church declared, in so many words, that "the white man has weakened the ngil, and the beyem have taken it over; now it is the ngil of ngbwel /sorcery/."

The initiates of the kôn or kun, a kind of magic that enables one to assume another person's strength without destroying his body, also seem to be grouped into a secret society with meetings every seven years.

Beyem associations do not usually include both sexes; male and female sorcerers meet together only occasionally, for orgiastic sabbaths.

The distinction between white and black magic is, nevertheless, difficult to draw the present time, and one can never tell offhand if the small groups springing up nearly everywhere to protect their members against bad luck by using, in addition to remnants of traditional rites, recipes copied from magic manuals printed in France, belong to the one or the other.

To come back tothe traditional associations, we must underline /the fact that/ in them there was a complete separation of the sexes, to such an extent that women were often forbidden to speak the name of a men's society or to show any kind of knowledge, even superficial, of its rites. The prohibition was less stringent for men with regard to women's rites, since the nsem, the breaking of a taboo, was for them punished by physical incapacity or illness rather than by death. /66/

A women's rite like mevungu had both a village aspect, on account of its geographical framework, the jurisdiction of its huts, and an interclan aspect as a result of exogamy. Much less is known of these women's rites than of the men's, for the very good reason that men are not allowed to know anything about them. Missionaries have condemned mevungu as obscene: I have heard that initiates who have gone through the menopause are supposed to play a male role in dances miming coition, without being able to obtain the slightest proof or the least detail (1). What is certain is that this is a rite of

1. A woman "chosen for her large vagina" presided, seated with legs spread apart. Each initiate would go tickle her and pull the clitoris. (J.B.)

fecundity, of fertility, and also of the hunt: an unlucky hunter may have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck.

have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck. This is not the only example of the indirect intervention of one sex in a rite of the opposite sex. Allégret points out that it is a "woman who has had bad luck fishing" who "finds the ironwood for making the war fetish." It certainly seems that he has mixed up ngil with sô, but the example remains valuable. Therefore, though traditional rites and the associations of initiates of these rites were strictly masculine or feminine, this does not altogether exclude the intervention of the opposite sex. No more can be said in our present state of knowledge (2).

2. The other important women's rite, ngômbô, was more especially limited to old women. The participants built a sort of basin out of four banana trunks and their leaves, in which a vegetable biañ /medicament/ was prepared that gave protection against theft. (J.B.)

Contemporary cults and associations, on the other hand, are open to both sexes, whether religious or politico-religious societies or mutual-aid associations.

The two principal politico-religious associations are the bwiti (or mbuti) and the ngôl, well described by Balandier (no. 175). They have spread to the north from Gabon and the Middle Congo and are not of Pahouin origin. They are beginning to penetrate Boulou country, where they have not been as successful as among the Fang of the south, undoubtedly because of the lesser degree of social destruction.

Bwiti was originally a "tyogo" ancestor cult, comparable to the Pahouin biéri, if one accepts Trilles. It must have first appeared among the Pahouin at the beginning of the century, probably among Pahouin families cut off from their clans and thus from the biéri and sô rites, whose significance is primarily ethnic and familial. Libreville was an important point of contact, not only between African peoples of different stock, but also with European religious systems. Modern bwiti borrows a great deal from Christianity and also from freemasonry, which was fairly widespread in Gabon before the war, especially in half-caste circles and on the periphery of principal towns. In assuming this syncretist character, bwiti appears at the same time as a nationalist—or Africanist—movement and as a progressive movement abandoning the old cults or rather modernizing them. It is the

any stranger could plant melen palms (Elaeis guineensis) and sa (Pachylobus edulis), but of a defense reflex to preserve control of a valuable crop and to ward off the wave of immigration it coul attract.

An examination of forms of pawning fields leads to a similar conclusion: there is far from a complete right to dispose of property. The harvest rather than the land is pledged. Among the Ewondo, in fact, the creditor may harvest and dispose of the produce. "Should the harvest surpass the debt, he will turn over to the debtor part of the produce. Since the owner runs the risk of having his land go to waste, the creditor may keep it in good heart and thus increase his credit. He may be induced to keep the property for several years: in fact, he keeps it long enough to be repaid out of the harvest. However, there is no assumption that he can keep it perpetually. Here we run into what is probably an important difference between the local land tenure and our own: everything takes place as if the land were inalienable (1)." The trend is similar among the Boulou, though

1. J. Binet, Budgets familiaux dans la zone cacaoyère du Cameroun /Family Budgets in the Cacao-growing Region of the Cameroons/, L'Homme d'Outre-mer, No. 3, 1956 (no. 93).

it must be admitted that the question of pawning land does not raise serious economic problems at present. (J. B.) /76/

f. Personal Property

This is undoubtedly the only form of property originally recognized. Much of it seems to have been collective, at least as concerns valuable possessions: the ésa was in charge of these possessions, the family patrimony which served mainly to pay the minsuba, "bride prices." There was, however, individual ownership of useful objects, men's weapons, women's gardening tools and household equipment, objects that were buried with the owner. It seems, also, that there was a sexual differentiation between the various categories of possessions: biŏm beyŏm were masculine, biŏm beyal were feminine, a distinction to be traced not to ownership, but to use and perhaps to origin. I have already mentioned that in the bilaba the njem bilaba of the west contributed imported goods, while his eastern counterpart

youths in the aba and prepared for further initiations, while beginning to participate fully in masculine activities, work and games. The bekungu (Fang, bekhun?) initiation that came directly after circumcision was not a general practice. My own impression is that this was not a tribal or clan rite like sɔ̂, but that of an association of diviners or seers involving only specially endowed individuals, perhaps related to the ndɔ̂ngɔ̂ rite restricted to grown men, which appears to have identical ritual tattoo marks.

For the mo'minga reaching puberty there is no stage equivalent to circumcision. In spite of what Trilles says, excision has apparently never been used except as a punishment for certain kinds of adultery or mild incest. It must not be forgotten that a little girl very soon went to live with her affinal family and that she was deflowered as soon as she reached puberty. She very rarely remained élenan, that is, pubescent and unmarried, and then for a very short time. One might almost say that her adolescence was telescoped into the period between childhood and the arrival of puberty marked by the mevungu rite.

This adolescent phase is now prolonged by the law fixing the marriageable age at fourteen (puberty usually comes during the twelfth year), by school attendance, and by the change in the bride-price system. Most of my friends of a certain age see in these facts the reasons for a crisis in immorality which they probably to some extent exaggerate.

Nevertheless, first menstruation was apparently acknowledged in a ceremony in which only women took part, but this may have been merely a preliminary to the mevungu initiation, about which hardly anything is known. Otherwise /as regards female adolescence/ coition is forbidden to immature girls, while unmarried girls who have begun menstruating have actually great sexual freedom, even in Christian circles. It must, however, be realized that only too often, especially in schools, there are girls deflowered before puberty, whereas boys seem to wait for circumcision /97/ before their first exploits — there are parents, worried about their sons' "good behavior," who give them aphrodisiacs as encouragement.

d. Transition to Adulthood

The ndoman is not yet a real person, nya mɔ̂nɔ̂; undoubtedly he participates in men's work, in hunting and clearing the land, but he

779 that everyone will recognize by its gait, pace and typical
535 mannerisms; then, one by one, he will act out scenes of pursuit and capture, of alliance, finally of actual assistance. Some dancers thus acquire a great reputation, which they certainly deserve.

These totemic dances have much in common with certain character dances at which the African excels, representational dances. For example, I remember having seen the dance of the bees, of the wild boar, and of the elephant, done with truly remarkable agility and realism.

Totemic dances are distinguished above all by the fact that they are accompanied, one might say rhythmically measured, by the totemic song. Furthermore, while character dances depend to a great extent upon the dancer's inspiration, totemic dance steps are more regulated and have certain invariable features. [513]

779 A common trait of all religious dances is decency, at
535 least relative decency. They are performed only by men, and
●831 women are not admitted except at circumcisions, and even then they do not mingle with the men. There is rarely any sex in them, in contrast to the purely recreational dances, especially those performed in the evening, at which at times license seems to be given to the greatest obscenity.

779 Religious dances always have a very marked quality of
831 antiquity, and the majority are very beautiful, in the precise meaning of the word.

In order to give an approximate idea of totemic dances, I have transcribed two of them which seem the most expressive, that of the flower, mvi, and that of the elephant, nzoǩ.

These dances are sung, danced, and mimed at the same time. Each note represents a tom-tom beat, a different bodily position and foot movement, whether a glissade, a leap, a heavy beat, or a rapid weaving in and out.

Totemic dance of the mvi flower:
Musical score, pp. 513-514 of text.]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

name, the *Eki* of the Fang being the *Orunda* of the Mpongwe. One day when on a journey among the people, I asked an old headman to share with me a chicken my boy had prepared for supper; the old man seemed pleased at my invitation, but asked the boy if it was a hen or cock fowl. Upon being informed that it was a cock, he declined to eat any of it: that was his *Eki*. As previously stated, I do not believe the natives worship the spirits of Present and Future, but to a certain degree ancestral worship does exist. A Fang places the skull of his father in a curious receptacle of bark, worshipping it, killing fowls and making blood offerings to it, and in many ways the whole matter somewhat resembles the worshipping at graves and before ancestral tablets as practised in China. The natives often pray to their father's skull before talking a large war palaver, or the purchase of a new woman. As worshipping departed ancestors is the chief duty of a faithful Chinaman, so making offerings and prayers to the departed father's spirit before the skull constitutes the great Fang fetish, or *bieti*. Wooden idols, *biyeme*, of men and women are made in a manner which makes the sex extremely apparent; yet whenever I have seen these figures in towns, the people did not seem to regard them as obscene, but as truthful representations of the sexes. I feel sure that to some extent, at least, phallic worship is practised among the Fang. Spirits are everywhere; in rocks, trees, forests, and streams; in fact, for the Fang, this life is one continual fight against spirits corporal and spiritual.

A peculiar belief regarding dreams is that when a person sleeps the soul often wanders away, and its experiences on these journeys are made known to the sleeper by dreams. After death the soul may inhabit any kind of animal.

Fetish Biang (medicine).—Fetish means anything; leopard teeth, human finger nails, hair, wood, iron, herbs. The article used as *biang* or fetish, has no intrinsic value, it is only valued because of connecting its owner with a spirit which can aid him. The leopard tooth fetish is supposed to impart the bravery of the leopard to its owner. Fetish is a spirit or combination of spirits manifested in material things.

Dili Mkuk.—To murder a person and save his skull as a fetish, or use the skull as medicine to bring women, guns, goats or goods. The people will make offerings to the skulls calling them by the names of persons killed. It is said that these prayers are always answered as desired.

Biang a Soli (hiding medicine).—A man goes and takes leaves of trees, and cuts them up. He says, "I have cut up leaves of trees" (or high grass, bushes). The women shell gourd seeds and mash them. They catch a fowl, kill it, and put it in the pot. They also put in the pot the medicine leaves, and the mashed gourd kernels. They put the pot on the fire, and boil (its contents). When they have boiled it, the medicine is cooked. They take the medicine pot off (the fire). They go and put it by the side of (*afwa*) the back of the *bieti*. The man who has put it there says to the *bieti*, other people want to kill me. He takes away the medicine pot. He opens the *bieti* basket. He takes a small piece of the bone (instead of this say to the woman and children he takes the excrement of the